



Hilltown Community Health Center

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HILLTOWN COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER AWARDED \$1 MILLION FOR NEW SITE IN AMHERST

WORTHINGTON, MA –Hilltown Community Health Center (HCHC) has been awarded \$1 million by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for the development of a new health center site in Amherst. The satellite location, which will be called the Pioneer Valley Health Center (PVHC), will be located in the Town of Amherst's Bangs Community Center. It will provide integrated primary medical and dental health care to area residents, regardless of their ability to pay, using the patient-centered model of care that HCHC currently offers at its four other sites.

"It has been real pleasure to work with the committed members of the community who have been collaborating for over 20 years on solutions to the gaps in access to medical and dental care." says Eliza Lake, HCHC's Executive Director. "HCHC shares with them the goal of accessible, culturally competent, and affordable health care for people, and is thrilled that all of our hard work is being recognized by the award of this funding. We are proud to be partnering with this extraordinary group."

The PVHC will provide primary medical and dental care to the unserved and underserved populations in the primary service area communities of Amherst, Northampton, and Hadley, as well as the secondary service area communities of Belchertown, Easthampton, Ware, Sunderland, Hatfield, Leverett, South Hadley, and Shutesbury. The PVHC is projected to eventually serve approximately 2,700 patients annually, and will increase access to affordable care for vulnerable populations. These populations include: uninsured and underinsured individuals and families; veterans; homeless individuals; new Americans; undocumented residents; and seasonal workers.

"Many of us have been working on this idea for years, and the persistence and collaborative approach must have impressed the HRSA reviewers. I am absolutely delighted that we will get a \$1 million dollar boost!" says State Representative Ellen Story (D-Amherst). Joanne Marqusee, President and CEO of Cooley Dickinson Health Care, which has given HCHC a grant that will support preliminary PVHC's operating costs, says "'This is really great news. I'm so proud we're working with HCHC and the Amherst community to make this important project a reality.'" And John Musante, Amherst Town Manager, says "Serving this need — it's why I'm in this business. Meeting an unmet need in the heart of downtown Amherst in collaboration with community organizations — I'm ecstatic about it."

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The total cost of the project is projected to be between \$1.5 million and \$2 million, and HCHC and the PVHC Planning Group are launching a fundraising campaign this fall to raise the remaining funds required to complete the renovations, purchase the required equipment, and help with short-term start-up operating costs. The PVHC is projected to open and begin serving patients in mid-2017.

“The HCHC Board is thrilled to have received this significant grant, and is pleased that HRSA views the establishment of the PVHC as a valuable effort worthy of substantial support,” says HCHC Board President, Diane Brenner. “We want to thank our Executive Director, Eliza Lake, the staff at the HCHC, as well as the numerous individuals and groups in Amherst who have had the vision and patience to work so hard to bring this project to fruition. The PVHC represents an important opportunity to extend the HCHC’s mission of providing accessible, affordable health care to all who need it, and the HCHC Board will continue to work in whatever way we can to help ensure its success.”

About Hilltown Community Health Center

Hilltown Community Health Centers (HCHC), established in 1950, is the only provider of medical, oral health, eye care, behavioral health, and community services in the Hilltowns of Western Massachusetts. HCHC employs approximately 105 people and serves patients from over 70 communities in the region. HCHC provides services six days a week, and has staff at five locations in Huntington and Worthington. The organization receives federal, state, local and private funding and accepts more than 700 different insurance plans, including MassHealth, as well as provides free and reduced-fee care to those who meet income guidelines.

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